

Original scientific papers**INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT: POLISH PERSPECTIVE**

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of the article is to briefly present the current Polish perspective on industrial heritage. It stands for specific aspects of the past, which do not necessarily conform the usual criteria of aesthetics or emotional commitment.

In the first part the basic information and the theoretical background are presented. The second is devoted to alleged oppositional processes: neglect and deterioration versus activity and re-usage. These two characterize the approach towards industrial heritage, simultaneously hype and ignorance. This assumption derives from research results conducted in previous works.

KEY WORDS:

Industrial heritage; Management; Industrial Monuments Route.

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SAŽETAK:

U članku se predstavlja trenutno stanje i perspektiva industrijskog nasljeđa na primjeru Poljske. Fokus je na industrijskom nasljeđu, specifičnom segmentu prošlosti koji se ne uklapa u standardne estetske forme i uobičajene predstave o njegovoj povezanosti sa kulturnim naslijeđem. U prvom djelu rada predstavljena je teorijska osnova problema dok se u drugom dijelu članka problematizuje pitanje nepoznavanja značaja industrijskog nasljeđa i ignorisanja svake mogućnosti njegove upotrebe u novim okolnostima. Članak je nastao kao rezultat sprovedenih istraživanja u ovoj oblasti i rezultatima postojeće literature o ovom problemu.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI:

Industrijsko nasljeđe; Menadžment; Industrijski spomenici.

Introduction

The aim of the article is to give a brief characteristic of the current situation of industrial heritage in Poland. Because of the fact, that the subject is so broad, I will explain it using selected examples, which I consider interesting. The following analysis should be seen not as one covering all issues, but rather an introduction to understanding the specifics of processes occurring in this country.

First, I would like to explain the basics of the Polish monument protection system. This synthetic analysis will give a picture of how the system works and where it lacks adjustments to practice and academic related issues. Then I will proceed to two, somewhat opposite, aspects of industrial heritage management: losing objects of industrial heritage and bringing them back to live. The first aspect is based on a research paper I have done on urban exploration.

The second one is determined by outcomes gained during my participation as a researcher in the project “Cultural Routes as a Medium of Change in Culture” [Szlaki kulturowe jako..., 2018]. Throughout this project I have been involved in data analysis, and also elaborated best practices. The results, combining interviews, portfolio analysis, and questionnaires, showed that the Industrial Monument Route in Silesia is a very well managed tourism product, and serves not only as an inspiration for other actors managing heritage, but plays also a great role in the process of rebuilding identity in the region [Bogacz-Wojtanowska, Gawel, Góral eds., 2016].

Summary Of The Monument Protection System

Before explaining the Polish perspective on industrial heritage, it seems quite reasonable to elucidate the monument protection system in general. *The Act of 23 July 2003 on the Protection of Monuments and the Care of Historical Monuments* is the reference point and the most important legal act in these terms. Of course, it is complemented by legislation concerning spatial planning and space management, museums, natural resources, environmental protection, building etc. [Pluszyńska, 2015; Pelczar, 2016]. Typically for such documents, in the Act definitions are listed, also the different types of protection, and responsibilities of people in charge at specific levels of administration etc.

The document defines monuments (movable and immovable) as such: these are “property or movable parts or assemblies, which are the work of man or those of his business and the testimony of a bygone era or event, which is in the interests of society due to their historical value, artistic or scientific” [Global regula-

tion. The Act of 23 July 2003 on the protection..., 2018]. Whereas heritage, although mentioned, is not further described (Gaweł, Zarządzanie dziedzictwem kulturowym ..., p. 90). This causes of course a few dilemmas.

For example, what particular actors of the monument protection system understand under “heritage” and how they interpret the term can be quite different. Usually the most common definition used in the academic discourse is still the one from the UNESCO guidelines for World Heritage Sites (Konwencja w sprawie ochrony światowego..., 1972). Although the convention seems a bit outdated, it still functions as a crucial reference point. Due to the fact that it is often criticized and is nowadays useful only together with the complementing definition of intangible heritage (Konwencja UNESCO w sprawie..., 2003), many scholars make the attempt to create new definitions incorporating the different aspects and shades of heritage.

For example Zbigniew Kobyliński (2011, p. 22) sees heritage as this part of cultural goods, which has been recognized by one generation after the other and thanks to this survived to these days (Kobyliński, 2011, p. 22). Whereas Łukasz Gaweł (2011) stresses the importance of an emotional link between the people and the relict of the past – if this relationship does not exist, the object may still be a monument, under legal protection due to its historical, artistic or other values, but it serves not necessarily as heritage. Many Polish academics conform to heritage as a product of present values and circumstances (Kobyliński, 2011; Kowalski, 2013).

The Act of 23 July 2003 on the Protection of Monuments and the Care of Historical Monuments is not perfect: it has a few gaps and causes misunderstandings, what is frequently being mentioned by practitioners. All of these are issues which would need a deeper legal analysis, going far beyond the scope of this article.

What I consider interesting, despite the frictions the document effects, is that technical monuments, especially mines, ironworks, power stations, are listed as types of monuments which need to be under protection independently of their state of preservation (Ustawa o ochronie zabytków..., 2003). This shows a quite modern approach towards the understanding of heritage, particularly its tricky type – the industrial relicts of the past.

The definition of heritage management seems to be even more tough. During research projects and while preparing academic papers, my colleagues and I often tried to define this process and put it somehow in a nutshell. Finally, I will generalize, we seem to agree that our perspective on heritage management basically is best described by Simon Thurley [Gaweł, 2016, pp. 19-20; Góral, 2014, p. 73].

The “circle of heritage” is an extremely useful model (Thurley, 2005, pp. 26-27). The circle is based on the assumption that by understanding heritage people start valuing it; when valued, people start caring for it. When it is cared for, heritage becomes enjoyable and people get interested in. By making people interested the circle revolves.

So the role of heritage “managers”, should be to make the circle circuit. I am of the opinion that a “heritage manager” is not necessarily a representative of the administration. Rather I would see this as a term comprising different actors involved in the system, which sway the circle. Also I think, basing on other authors, that the starting point for any work concerning heritage, is the identification of heritage. First of all, we need to know what we have – what kind of resources we have to dispose.

Losing Industrial Heritage

Industrial heritage represents a specific type of heritage objects which originally were not meant to be heritage, but were just used in everyday life (Howard, 2003; Towse, 2011). So their transformation into objects of value and emotional attachment seems particularly interesting.

Like in many other countries, industrial heritage in Poland has been dismissed and treated as a burden for quite some time. This is obvious for various reasons. Many of the industrial objects originated in eras which Polish citizens associate with times of suffer and inferior. After the war, the very heirs were missing – former industrial objects, if they survived both World Wars, lost their formal owners. They were also part of a different identity, perhaps a different culture. Then, the next step in the process of deterioration, probably the most obvious one, was the fact of no funding. In times of transformation, Poland had other priorities than the renovation of damaged and, at that point, quite useless industrial sites dating back to the passed centuries. The last years have also shown another hazard: in the competition against new investments, relicts of former industries have nearly no chance to be saved.

A few years ago I have been working on the subject of urban exploration (Pokojska, Urban exploring – City..., pp. 67-82). The number of industrial objects from different periods, which has been documented by the explorers, often through gaining illegal access, was quite shocking. Especially when considered that their photographs were often the only (and much too frequently the last) evidence these places still existed. They seemed to stay outside the official discourse about industrial heritage.

These examples showed me how fast objects might get lost and disappear forever. Often these were traces of the past about which the media would report only at the very moment they vanished from the city's landscape. The objects were not the most iconic, valuable in terms of scientific or esthetical values, rather they were representing the "backstage" of urban lives. Still, I am of the opinion that in a certain period of time, they were perhaps more important for a society's development than a church or residential building. The church or residential building are in all probability now recognized and approved objects of heritage: promoted, funded, visited. Whereas a crucial industrial object got lost in the last corner of collective memory. Also I have the impression, that way too often people forget that losing heritage is equal to losing identity (Albert, 2007), and sometimes, even the sense of humanity (Bokova, Reiter, 29.10.2016. p.18).

Of course, it is impossible to save everything from the past, also one of the features of the heritage paradigm is the possibility to forget, abandon, disinherit, and ignore (Kobyliński, 2011; Ashworth, 2015). But still, alluding to Andrzej Tomaszewski (2007), I see it as important to save at least the information about the places – to note that they existed is what we owe to future generations. Probably the current digital heritage turn will give new inputs and a broad spectrum of possibilities in these terms.

The years of indifference negatively influenced the condition of many industrial heritage objects. After a while something slowly started improving – the potential of industrial heritage has been discovered. Since then many creative and interesting investments have been undertaken: in terms of protection, but also in terms of tourism and education. Perhaps it could be even said, thinking for example of lofts in old factories in Łódź, that in Poland industrial style and inspirations became fancy.

Best Practices In Heritage Management: Industrial Monuments Route in Silesia

Thinking of best practices concerning industrial heritage management in Poland, one worth mentioning is the Industrial Monuments Route (IMR) in Silesia. The project stands out mainly due to its cohesion. In general, it is a tourism product of high quality:

"Emotions and experiences are the benefits that the Industrial Monuments Route offers to its visitors. [...] Through direct contact with the still working machines and equipment one can almost 'touch the history'. The specificity of the tourist

contact with 'live' displays goes beyond the standard touring based on the presentation of the exhibits in the museum showcases. [...] During a visit to industrial facilities one can hear the humming engine noises and the clatter of machinery, smell the wood, sense the chill of the underground, touch metal, etc.. As a result, visitors can not only learn about the industrial heritage of the region, but also touch, feel and taste what constitutes its unique tradition." (Szlak Zabytków Techniki, 2018)

Forty two objects in the region of Silesia in southern Poland are listed on the IRM. They represent different branches of heavy industry: mining and metallurgical tradition, energy flow, railways, telecommunication, water production and the food industry. They can be found in cities dispersed in the whole voivodeship: Bielsko-Biała, Bytom, Chorzów, Cieszyn, Katowice, Pszczyna, Radzionków, Tarnowskie Góry – just to mention some (Szlak Zabytków Techniki, 2018). The monuments exemplify the region's specification where industrial heritage is still on one of the most important elements of both, the landscape and the identity (Hajduga, 2016).

Apart from stressing the local identity and activating tourism, the IRM accomplishes through its actions another role – it helps to start the heritage cycle. By actions happening on the IRM, people get reminded what their heritage is; that their identity is something to be proud of. This makes them interested in their own past, motivates to explore it, enjoy, and kind of celebrate it: through events, tourism, museums, or design. All of these stops the process of deterioration. Of course, once again, it does not prevent any loss, but it empowers to have a creative and innovative approach towards industrial heritage.

As a side line I would like to introduce the fact, that in Poland during the last decade many labels and companies emerged which have as a source of inspiration elements of local heritage [Pokojska, 2016]. Apart from folk, modernism and industrial heritage are huge trends at the moment. Just to mention a two interesting examples: Łódzka Rajuza [2018] launched tights decorated with industrial monuments – architectural icons of specific Polish cities; broKat [2018] from Silesia developed jewelry made out of coal, also designed planters with ornaments reminding Silesian landscapes; Qdizajn [2018] became famous for film posters translating original titles into the Silesian dialect. These actions proof that heritage can be cool, fancy, and fit to a modern lifestyle. The IRM contributed to the image shift massively.

A moment of ennoblement for the IMR was the incorporation to the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) in 2010 (Hajduga, 2016). ERIH not only allows tourists to explore industrial relicts in whole Europe, but also it is great database

concerning industrial heritage. It is an example of a tool guiding academics or practitioners how to order, manage, and analyze different types of industrial heritage.

Four objects belonging to the IMR became ERIH anchor points. Two of them are the breweries in Tychy and in Żywiec, which are described as pleasant places to discover the history of over 100, respectively 400, years of brewing history:

[In Żywiec Brewery Museum] “Visitors are asked to place their hands on straining vats, wooden barrels and many other objects, [...] 18 cellar rooms cut into the cliff – the historic ice cellars where the beer is stored – lead visitors through an entertaining 150 years of brewing history.” (ERIH, 2018)

[Tyskie Brewing Museum] “The brew house in the Tyskie brewery [...] makes a truly palatial impression with its blue glazed tiles adorned with flowers, richly decorated pillar capitals, a precious paneled ceiling, and an interior full of blank copper brewery kettles, valves and instruments, hand wheels and shining pipelines. The bottles still carry the family coat-of-arms of the Princes of Promnitz who began the local brewing tradition in 1629.” (ERIH, 2018)

One of the most impressive places on the IMR is The Historic Coal Mine in Zabrze. The mine, as Dariusz Walerjański underlines, is only one of four in Europe, where visitors have the unique opportunity to go down in an authentic mine cage. He describes the place as one where

“communing with inanimate nature, you will feel the taste of adventure, taking an exciting ride in the shaft cage deep into the underground excavations [...]. And everything mentioned above in the surroundings of authentic mining machines and devices, amongst coal created here in the carboniferous period” (Walerjański, 2010).

What makes the place really extraordinary, is the unique opportunity to go on a sightseeing tour 320 meters under the surface, which makes it the deepest visitor mine on the continent:

“A 250 ton rough coal container, conveyor belts, an Alpina tunneling machine in full working action, hydraulic supporting pillars, a number of different transport constructions, a seismograph chamber and a simulated mining accident take visitors back into the midst of the underground world of the 20th century. One ‘storey’ higher, at a depth of 170 meters, visitors can go even further back into the past, and experience working conditions around 1900 in such a realistic manner that they could be excused for thinking that time had stood still.” (ERIH, 2018)

The latest inscription on the UNESCO World Heritage List in Poland is the Historic Silver Mine World Heritage Site in Tarnowskie Góry. What makes this place special are

“the elements of the water management system, located underground and on the surface, [which] testify to continuous efforts over three centuries to drain the underground extraction zone and to use undesirable water from the mines to supply towns and industry.” (World Heritage List, 2018)

Worth mentioning is also the fact, that the IMR has thoroughly designed promotional activities, including: a clear and recognizable identification system; a dedicated online system about the IRM and Industriada; Facebook pages; objects marking system; printed materials; YouTube channel; outdoor advertisement; press releases; route presentations; studio visits; promotion during other industrial heritage events (for example during Extraschicht in the German Ruhr area); gadgets; and international cooperation (Szlak Zabytków Techniki, 2018).

Probably the most significant, concerning a broader audience, is Industriada, an annual celebration of the IRM, which attracts over 75 000 visitors (Industriada, 2018). Its concept is quite similar to the ExtraSchicht. Basically during one weekend in June the IRM encourages visitors and locals to celebrate all together the region's industrial past. In different cities in Silesia concerts, performances, exhibitions, tours and so on take place simultaneously. The program is diversified, but all activities have to be tied to a past characterized by coal, mining, iron and steel works etc.

Conclusions

One of the aspects of heritage, which in my opinion has to be always kept in mind, is that it is not possible to copy-paste management solutions from one industrial heritage to another. But I see it as important to present and exchange good practices between scholars and practitioners which may be a vital source of inspiration.

This is why I decided to briefly introduce the Industrial Route of Monuments. In my opinion it is a great exemplification showing that a creative approach, still respectful towards the past and the people living in the region, may help change the image, activate the society, build identity, and enable tourism. The selected quotes were intended to stress the uniqueness of the route. Perhaps it is one of these “places” which should be better explored on site rather than overanalyzed in an academic paper. The IRM stands on the contrary to many sites I have only been introduced to via examples of digital heritage completed by urban explorers.

Assumingly, the situation of industrial heritage experienced in Poland may seem similar to the one occurring in other countries. On the other hand, the history of Poland is strewn with scars, cuts, lost and gained independence, changing narratives, big and small identities – sometimes contradicting. All of these make heritage management itself difficult, industrial heritage management even more complex.

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